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DEPT FOR NSC SAMANTHA POWER
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SUBJECT: IRAQ REFUGEES AND IDPS - BROOKINGS DOHA CONFERENCE

¶1. (U) Summary: The November 18-19 Brookings conference "Regional Perspectives on Iraqi Displacement" in Doha brought together representatives of major donor countries, development agencies, humanitarian players, and some regional representatives, but suffered from the absence of any senior Government of Iraq (GOI) officials or any officials from the Syrian government. Discussion focused on the interplay between humanitarian and development programs to address the needs of Iraq's displaced, with many participants suggesting development partners such as the World Bank had a role to play at an early stage. The U.S. delegation, led by NSC Senior Director Samantha Power, emphasized that security and national reconciliation would support early returns of displaced in some places and not others, and that there is a need to fill gaps in addressing the needs of vulnerable IDPs and to ensure their access to GOI services. The U.S. also stressed the importance of Iraqi leadership in future discussions on the subject. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Brookings-Bern Project organized the conference with support from the World Bank. Conference participants included representatives of: The World Bank, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Iraqi Council of Representatives Committee on Displacement, the governments of Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, Egypt, Japan, Denmark, Switzerland, the European Union, Canada, and the United States. NSC Senior Director Samantha Power headed the U.S. delegation. Only one Iraqi government official, from the Ministry of Interior, participated due to GOI reservations about both the venue and the forum. Dr. Walter Kaelin, representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, participated, as did Brookings Vice President and Director for Foreign Policy Ambassador Martin Indyk.

¶3. (U) Two papers were presented at the conference. The first, a general overview of the issue prepared by the Brookings-Bern staff, laid out general issues. It noted the need for better accuracy regarding the number of displaced, especially refugees, and stressed the need for greater engagement between humanitarian and development actors in reaching durable solutions. The paper also suggested a more regional approach to the issue, something that was not widely endorsed at the conference. Another paper prepared by the international organization for migration focused on the challenge of sorting out legal property claims in Iraq. The paper cited progress that had been made through the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes in dealing with Saddam-era property claims. The paper advocated accelerating this process, working to create a better database of property claims resulting from conflict after 2003, making efforts to resolve disputes arising from the occupation of public property, and addressing challenges posed by desertification.

¶4. (U) Iraqi parliament Displacement Committee Chairman Dr. Abddel Khaliq Mohammad Rasheed Zangana provided an overview of displacement in Iraq, including aspects of historical displacement and more

recent developments. He noted that various parties have political interests in exaggerating the number of displaced. However, he still estimated that there may be 2.0 million externally displaced Iraqis and 2-3 million displaced inside the country. Zangana, QIraqis and 2-3 million displaced inside the country. Zangana, himself a former IDP, gave the government credit for taking certain measures, including the institution of orders 101 and 262 that provide for restitution of property and compensation to some displaced families for their losses. He strongly recommended that the GOI dedicate more resources to the displaced, including an increase in returnee grants, now set at 1.0 million dinars, to 3-4 million dinars.

15. (U) World Bank representatives made two formal presentations at the conference. They both focused on how to overcome the relief to development gap. Both presentations emphasized the need to integrate concerns for displaced people into existing development projects. Reflecting on what the World Bank could bring to the issue, it was noted that the Bank has a strong convening capacity to include both governments and development actors. The representatives of the World Bank also emphasized the importance of the Bank engaging early in the process, with a focus on field activity. Finally, the World Bank representatives urged development actors to become engaged even at a time when security remains fluid.

16. (U) NSC Senior Director Power briefed the group on the results of her just completed mission to Iraq. She noted that the Diyala initiative demonstrated that there is the potential for returns supported by improved security and national reconciliation in some areas. However, her visit to Iraq's largest IDP cluster located in Baghdad (Chikook) showed that in many cases security conditions may not yet support returns and that alternate durable solutions will need to be sought. Power also noted that there were important gaps

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in the delivery of services and the GOI would need to do more to overcome practical impediments for Iraqi displaced seeking access to services.

17. (U) The U.S. delegation stressed the need for all future such discussions to include government of Iraq leadership from the beginning. There was general support for the idea that development actors should engage early in addressing the needs presented by displacement and that the displacement issue should be factored into the national and donor development efforts.

18. (U) Dr. Walter Kaelin also provided his own summary of the issues. Kaelin noted that the displacement of Iraqis is a complex and chronic issue. While it is important to focus on recent displacement, it is also necessary to seek solutions for historically displaced individuals. He pointed to the October 2010 census as a potentially useful opportunity to get more accurate figures on the number of displaced. However, he stressed that the international community's approach to the displaced should be based on needs, not numbers. Kaelin listed several steps that could help improve the environment for returns and reintegration including: ensuring that stipends are sufficient and the displaced have access to them; addressing the needs of IDPs in settlements since they are often the most vulnerable; putting in place systems to address property restitution; integrating IDP's and return issues into development plans; and efforts to overcome limitations on access for humanitarian and development actors.

19. (SBU) Comment: Although the organizers had hoped that the meeting might launch an effort to develop a regional plan for dealing with Iraq's displaced, the absence of serious representation from the Government of Iraq and any representation from the government of Syria - host to the largest number of Iraqi refugees in the world - made such an outcome impossible. Participants nevertheless agreed to continue an exchange of information and views on these issues.

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